

SNCO FIELD REPORTS
(September 28-October 1, 1966)

September 28, 1966

ALABAMA: Atty. Jellinek reported that Charlie Shutes had a hearing in Opelika, Ala. for failure to report for draft. His trial is set for Oct. 17th, bail is \$1,000. He has been returned to Atlanta to finish his sentence for participating in anti-draft demonstrations here.

Gloria House reported that there have been numerous shootings in Alabama, probably as a result of effort geared toward coming November elections. Candidates are being contested as to their qualifications, and both black candidates for state representative have been disqualified. There are nine other black candidates for county offices. There is an anti-panther party movement within the black middle-class community; this faction wants Wilson Baker for sheriff, and is being led by Rev. Reese. Generally, Selma Negroes are for Baker and the rural black people are pushing the Black Panther. Jim Clark is running as a write-in candidate.

LCDC seems to be semi-outlawed in Dallas County. Judge refuses to see them, they are out-of-state lawyers with no license to practice.

September 30, 1966

PINE BLUFF, ARKANSAS: Vince O'Connor reported the following: T.E. Patterson (former Executive Director of Arkansas Teachers Assn.-Negro group) gained a seat on Little Rock School Board. He is extremely competent, moderate, of center wing in Civil Right movement. The fact that he was elected in Little Rock (with 23% Negro population) is a good indication of the work and effort that was put into his campaign; however, the white vote was split over 3 candidates. It was a landslide victory in Negro community and whites were generally unaware of Negro activity to elect him.

In Pine Bluff Area, 5 Negro candidates were elected to school board positions, 3 were from Jefferson County. O'Connor had met twice with election commissioner, and Negro pollwatchers were at all polls to watch the counting of ballots, although none were employed as clerks or judges. In cases where Negro candidates lost, it seemed to be a problem of not working hard enough and not being organized.

On Sept. 24, 1966 there were shootings in Wabbaseka as a result of the Negro community beginning to organize around the issues that affect them. In the week preceeding shooting, there were 3 community meetings, out of which came decision to run Negro candidates for City Council. The homes of 3 of the people involved in meetings were shot into, no one hurt. There seems to be good potential for this group to develop into strong community organization which will engage in political action. In the future, Vince would like to see all of community groups in county tie up.

In Eudora, Ark., Mrs. Mabel Allen (Negro candidate) defeated white man (Charles Hall) for Eudora School Board position: town is 50% Negro with small margin of Negro children in majority. Her election was result of concerted campaign by Negroes of Eudora.

NESBIT, MISS. Ransome Moore reported the following: On Sunday, Sept. 24, 1966 while he was in Memphis, Tenn. Greyhound Bus Station, he was arrested for "Disturbing the Peace." Incident evolved out of him simply having a Black Power button on, which attracted the attention of some black youths who questioned him about meaning of button. Ransome began talking about concept of Black Power while groups of boys listened intently; at this time, a worker at bus station dashed inside, 15 minutes later 2 cops came up, arrested Ransome, jailed him for 1 hour. He was bailed out, had court hearing in Memphis on Wed. Sept. 27, found guilty of "Disturbing Peace" and fined \$16.00. In Nesbit (Bisota County) Miss. he is beginning to work on ASCS elections, a Rev. Dalford is running for School Board there.

Sept. 30, 1966 (continued)

PHILADELPHIA, PENN. SNCC Johnny Wilson reported the following: Atty. Cecil B. Moore (NAACP Pres.) has taken the case of Billy Paul Williams (see Sepecial Phila. Report). SNCC held a rally Wed. night, Sept. 28, 1966, attempted to mobilize support and get force to attend hearing for Billy Paul on Thursday morning, Sept. 29. On Thurs. morn. the court-room was full, Cecil Moore made mockery of police, judge, and whole judicial system. All charges were dropped except interfering with officer, bail was lowered to \$300.00.

Philly SNCC is now in process of forming Legal Defense Fund for Poor People, and first meeting has been held. Also forming core of black lawyers to work with Legal Defense Fund, want to develop programs where these lawyers can be militant, defend militant blacks, and still survive.

October 3, 1966

GREEN COUNTY, ALABAMA Ralph Brown reported the following: There have been tent burnings there, the first one occurred about three or four weeks ago. The second tent was burned Friday, Sept. 30, it belonged to Mr. Manse Bell and family, no one was hurt but the Bell family lost all of their possessions. A young 18 year old boy (Willie Jame Cooper) was killed last Monday (Sept. 26) in Folkland, Greene County. It is believed that he was killed because some Negroes had run a few white men out of there about a week before that, and this was probably a retaliatory act. His body had been laid on road and was so badly mutilated that cause of death could not be determined. Tents are now pitched at Folkland, Ala. on highway: there are 4 families, totaling 23 people (16 children) in 2 tents. There is no well, nor inside toilets, etc. The Green County Freedom Organization is running candidates for sheriff, tax assessor, and the school board of Green County.

October 6, 1966

NESBIT, MISS. Ransome Moore reported the following: On Monday, Oct. 3, Mr. Charles Murdock (Negro) pulled in car up in front of Jones Store, and as he went in, Mrs. Jones called him a black M. F. Murdock then spoke to Mr. Jones about incident, telling him to instruct his wife not to hurl racial epithets at him. An argument developed between Murdock and Jones, meanwhile Mrs. Jones called cops. Murdock returned to his home, and cops went there, began to argue with Murdock and proceeded to beat him. After the cops put Murdock into police car, Mrs. Murdock questioned them as to why they were taking him, what charges were etc. One of cops hit Mrs. Murdock, she hit him back, and both Mr. and Mrs. Murdock were taken to jail, arrested and charged with the following: "disturbing peace," "disorderly conduct," "resisting arrest," and "striking officer." Bond was set at \$800.00 for Mrs. Murdock and \$1200.00 for Mr. Murdock; the community raised bail money and got them out.

Bob Lewell (white FDP worker) was arrested in Bisota City, as he was standing in front of store talking to group of Negroes. The cops came by, arrested him for "disturbin peace," and "inciting to riot," since they said 3 or more people were gathered, he is now out of jail.

Ransome Moore is only SNCC worker in Nesbit area, working under difficult conditions. Former SNCC workers are going through community (Nesbit, Bisota Cty., and Marshall Cty.) making disparaging remarks about SNCC.

JACKSON FDP: Chester Taylor reported the following: There will be public protest meeting Sat., Oct. 8, 1966 for CDGM (see following report); there is a New York Corporation still supporting CDGM, so there is a chance it may still be able to survive, without federal support. FDP is without funds and unable to function properly.

SITUATION IN MISSISSIPPI CONCERNING CDGM AND NEW "MISS. ACTION FOR PROGRESS

October 8, 1966

There is a current drive on to kill the CDGM, and to replace it with the newly formed Mississippi Action for Progress. This move has apparently been organized by Sen Stennis of Miss., the white Miss. power structure, with the backing of Federal Gov't. The M.A.P. was chartered on August 13, 1966 in one day. There had been discussions with the OEO which initiated the setting up of this group. Aaron Henry was asked for a list of names of Negroes in the state to be placed on new board (to give appearance of "integration") to supplant CDGM. There are 12 people on board, with no poor people at all: some of board members include Aaron Henry, Owen Cooper (Pres. of Miss. Chemical Corp.), Hodding Carter, LeRoy Percy (rich plantation owner) and other rich whites, with few handpicked Negro bourgeoisie. Funds of CDGM were cut off, and some 2,400 workers in 28 counties will now be unemployed. The OEO has made formal charges against CDGM, claiming that there is (1) mismanagement, (2) that CDGM is a front for Black Power, (3) nepotism within CDGM, and (4) that program is not designed for children but for adults. There have been investigations of CDGM by at least 6 governmental agencies, among them Stennis, the Office of Inspection of OEO, and Gov't. Accounting Office. Also students from Howard and Yale were sent into the office of OEO to dig up dirt on CDGM, one of them was Marvin Robinson. Dean Ferguson of Howard Law School issued statement saying that his law students were misused. These law students posed as civil rights workers. The Board of Inquiry of the Citizen Crusade Against Poverty is looking into the charges against CDGM, and there was a scheduled confrontation between Shriver and the Bd. of Inquiry on Friday, Oct. 6, 1966. The Bd. of Inquiry made a statement saying in effect that HEADSTART has been quoted by Shriver, or rather that CDGM has been quoted as model HEADSTART program, that it had made mistakes, but these mistakes were inevitable given the level of sophistication of the people working in program. Reuther made a statement Oct. 7, attacking Shriver. THE REAL ISSUES IN THE CURRENT MOVE TO KILL CDGM ARE THE FOLLOWING: (1) CAN THERE BE INDEPENDENT POVERTY PROGRAM IN MISS. OUTSIDE OF EASTLAND AND STENNIS' CONTROL? (2) THERE IS ATTEMPT NOT ONLY TO REBUILD DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN MISS, BUT RE-INSTATE OLD LINE DEMOCRATS, BUSINESSMEN, PLANTERS, AND NEWSPAPER EDITORS---COUPLED WITH A FEW NEGROES TO GIVE IT AIR OF "INTEGRATION," (3) THE BOARD OF M.A.P. IS REALLY CONTROLLED BY OWEN COOPER OF MISS. CHEMICAL CORP., LEROY PERCY (PLANTATION OWNER), AND HODDING CARTER. III. THESE THREE PEOPLE CAN ADD AT THEIR DISCRETION ANY NEW MEMBERS TO THE BOARD, (4) GIVEN THE CURRENT POLITICAL TRENDS IN THE SOUTH, NEGROES WILL NOT SERVE ON THE BOARD AFTER SIX MONTHS, AND (5) OUTSIDE OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS, THE REAL QUESTION IS WHETHER OR NOT INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION WILL EVER BE POSSIBLE IN THE STATE SINCE THE REQUEST OF THE BOARD IS FOR PROGRAMS IN SIXTY COUNTIES TO BE EXTENDED TO 82. THIS WILL BUILD A TREMENDOUS PATRONAGE BASE FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND FIGHT ANY INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION.

REPORT FROM PHILADELPHIA SNCC OFFICE CONCERNING PRESENT DISTURBANCES IN THAT CITY

October 5-8, 1966

Beginning Sunday, Oct. 2, whites living in Kensington area of Philadelphia began rioting and tearing up neighborhood because a Negro family (Mr. and Mrs. Leon Wright) had moved in at 2474 Coral St. This area is adjacent to North Phila. black ghetto. Chhrrs of "white Power" flooded the air as poor whites threw trash cans and other debris into home of Wright family. No Negro cops were allowed in area, on Oct. 5 about 19 whites were arrested for "disorderly conduct" as 500 whites roamed the area. Although the riot was then out of control, no tear gas or billy clubs were used, and whites were handled with "kid gloves." Police Commissioner Rizzo is calling the riot a "demonstration." Negro girls in Kensington High School (all girls school) have been maliciously attacked by whites in neighborhood, and chased down the streets by white cops. This is the second time that this type of thing has happened to Negro girls at this particular school.

The white rioters have been getting restless, started throwing bricks and bottles at cops, shouting anti-Negro slogans at white cops, some bricks thrown through autos, this has all been played down in press. On Oct. 5, Phila. SNCC office issued the following press release:

The Philadelphia Chapter of SNCC deplores the kid glove treatment of the white hoodlums in the Kensington area. Although several policemen have been injured in the rioting, bricks, bottles, cherry bombs, and molotov cocktails have been thrown at policemen, Deputy Commissioner F. Rizzo insists on calling these riots "demonstrations." We wonder how the Phila. Police Dept. can only manage to find 15 policemen to guard the home of Mr. and Mrs. Leon Wright, the Negro family who just moved into Kensington. We wonder how the police dept. can only manage to find 110 policemen to patrol the Kensington area which has been besieged since the week-end by thousands of angry whites. We wonder if Deputy Police Commissioner F. Rizzo is so short of manpower in this situation when in all the demonstrations held by Negroes at Girard College and City Hall, he seemed to need as many policemen as pickets.

Philadelphia SNCC demands that at least 1,000 additional policemen, black and white—not just white, be sent into the area to protect the lives and property of Negro citizens in and around the area from the destruction at the hands of white racists. We also demand the immediate mobilization of the National Guard unless the Phila. Police Dept. and the City of Phila. moves quickly. Negroes in this city well realize that crys of law and order by police in our neighborhoods have simply been an excuse to terrorize the Negro ghettos. We do not condone police brutality in any instance, but if police feel that force and arrests are necessary on South St. and Ridge Ave. in the black community, then we feel they should take the same type of action in the white streets of Kensington.

The Black Community demands immediate action.

On Oct. 6, 1966, Barry Dawson reported the following from the Phila. SNCC Office: The NAACP is trying to take over the case of Mr. and Mrs. Leon Wright. Presently, Mrs. Wright is at home with 3 brothers, 3 children, husband, and several black people who are concerned over situation. On Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, (Oct. 2, 3, and 4,) the police barricades were 3 to 4 blacks from Wright home. On Wed., when Barry Dawson arrived on scene, barricades had been moved to corner of street where home is located, within throwing distance of Wright home. Early Wed., the Ku Klux Klan was there with signs saying "BURN, NIGGERS BURN." The Klan says they will be at Girard College Demonstration on Sat., Oct. 8, to counter-demonstrate. Klan groups from Baltimore, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Arkansas are to converge on scene--robes and all. Now, Negro cops have been moved into area in front of Wright house. There is a rumor spreading that "Somebody will get blown away tonight." Barry Dawson will be at Wright house tonight, probably remain there for awhile.

On Oct. 8, 1966, Johnny Wilson reported the following from the Phila. SNCC Office: Last night, Oct. 7, 36 more whites were arrested on Kensington St., cops prevented gangs of whites from gathering. Whites arrested were charged with "disorderly conduct" and "trying to conceal deadly weapons." At the Wright home, groups of interested Negroes came and went all night, many autos bearing them had NAACP, CORE and SNCC stickers on them. The police barricades were removed, and carloads of whites drove by. About 100 whites went to a community meeting held at white high school to discuss the situation and what to do about Wright family being in neighborhood. SNCC tried to organize white students at Temple University to deal with problem of white racism by urging them to march from Temple University through the Kensington area in protest of events happening there. Johnny Wilson spoke there on Wed. and advised that course of action, told white students they had to deal with their own problems; however, other groups advised them it was unsafe to proceed with such a march; that they wouldn't have adequate police protection, and students reneged on plan. SNCC sent a telegram to Gov. Stratton condemning the action of local and state govt. in handling of riots.

and also sent wire to Mayor Tate.

SNCC worker Johnny Wilson spoke at a rally held at Girard College on Oct. 8, rally attended by 2 to 3 thousand people. Other speakers included Min. Jeremiah X of Phila. Muslim Mosque and Atty. Cecil B. Moore. The audience responded overwhelmingly in favor of SNCC's position and concept of Black Power, and some funds were collected for Phila. SNCC office. About 87 people were signed up for Philadelphia Freedom Organization (Black Panther Party), and tons of high school students joined the Black Student Union of High Schools, a militant young group of blacks who organized and carried out a demonstration at their school (Simon Gratts H.S.) within one week. Much of activity in N. Phila. is result of Tony Robinson of Phila. SNCC staff. Things are going well there as far as activity and organization go, Johnny Wilson continues to work on Independent Defense Fund for SNCC.

OCTOBER 10, 1966

ATLANTA, GEORGIA..... Workers from the SNCC Atlanta Project filed suit on Oct. 10 in U.S. District Court, Northern District of Georgia, Atlanta Division "TO END CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT IN THE ATLANTA PRISONS AND JAILS" against Mayor Ivan Allen and Ralph Hulsey, Prison Administrator. Attorney for the plaintiffs (SNCC ATLANTA PROJEC is Howard Moore of Atlanta, Ga. A description of the inhuman conditions existing in Atlanta prisons, taken from this law-suit follows:

1. All work assignments at the jail and prison are determined by the racial prejudices of the defendant Ivan Allen and Hulsey; the dirtiest and most dangerous job and assignments are reserved solely for the inmates who are Negroes and black.
2. Only Negro females are assigned to and required to serve as waitresses in the dining halls, and in this role they are required to serve the white guards' food and thereby be subjected to insults and indignities. When, as in the case of the named plaintiff, Miss Flora Goodloe, refused to perform this task for the white guards on or about the 6th of October, 1966, she was placed in solitary confinement, the "box."
3. Solitary confinement, or the "box" as the guards call it, consists of being placed in a windowless box seven feet long, seven feet high and four feet wide. Sleep occurs only when complete exhaustion sets in and the prisoner can no longer prevent himself from sprawling on the cement floor covered with the vomit and other human waste allowed to accumulate in the box week after week. The hapless inhabitant of the "box" is forced to lose all sense of time and night and day under the constant glare of the single light bulb, the only source of light, which is lighted all day and all night. Food is withheld at the whim of the guard. When food is given it consists only of water and a few slices of bread. Said punishment is not reasonably related to the permissible ends of confinement and imprisonment and is imposed without a hearing.
4. Sleeping, eating, religious worship, visitors and visiting arrangements are all done on a racial basis--with strict segregation of the Negro prisoners in the poorest arrangements and facilities.
5. White men with exaggerated hatred of black people (as shown by their conduct and the racial epithets and concepts frequently mouthed) are assigned guard jobs in the prisons. These guards are permitted, aided, and encouraged to express the racial hatred. These guards have the unfettered power to beat prisoners, revoke the "good time" which enables one to be released from confinement sooner, or place a prisoner in the "box," solitary confinement....for either bad reasons or no reasons at all.

6. That for merely greeting each other with the phrase "Black Power" Negro prisoners have been put in the "box" and starved.

7. The named male plaintiffs in this suit (in addition to the general pattern of racial persecution and segregation to which all the Negro prisoners are made to endure solely because of race) are segregated from all other Negro prisoners and denied the normal contacts and work assignments available to the other inmates. This segregation within segregation is perpetrated solely because of the personal animosity of the defendants, and those they employ, to the concept of "Black Power" and ending the war in Vietnam. The plaintiffs are intimately identified with both "unpopular" viewpoints.

8. The racial prejudice of the defendants finds further expression in the form of denial of proper medical care:

A. Dwight Williams, plaintiff, though suffering from a severe leg injury inflicted at the time of his arrest--is merely given pills.

B. Johnny Wilson, plaintiff, though suffering from acute attacks of dizziness and unconsciousness--is merely given pills believed to be aspirins.

C. Donald Howard, plaintiff, presently suffering from paralyzing pains and other symptoms which suggest a hernia--is merely given pills believed to be aspirins.

The plaintiffs are asking that the court take the following course of action:

1. Grant the plaintiffs a temporary restraining order against the acts and omission of the defendants set forth in this complaint.

2. Grant the plaintiffs a preliminary injunction enjoining the defendants, their agents, subordinates, associates and those acting in concert with them from perpetrating further acts of cruel and unusual punishment in the City Prisons and Jails, and that after a hearing a permanent injunction be granted.

3. Render a declaratory judgment stating that the acts, customs, and practices within the prisons and jails of the City of Atlanta of racial segregation are violative of the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution.

4. In the alternative order the immediate release of the plaintiffs from the Atlanta prison if the defendants do not forthwith end the blatant racial segregation and cruel and unusual punishment being imposed in these institutions at this time.

5. Grant such other and further relief as to the court may seem just and lawful.

The deplorable and inhuman conditions forced upon our 8 brothers and 2 sisters in the Atlanta Stockade must be brought to an end. SNCC Headquarters in Atlanta is appealing to all SNCC offices, projects and friends to aid us in this common struggle. Send telegrams to Mayor Allen demanding that charges against prisoners be dropped, that 10 SNCC workers being held for protesting the war in Vietnam and the drafting of black men to serve in that war be released, and that the City Administration take immediate action to correct deplorable conditions existing in Atlanta prisons and jails. Any and all pressure that can be brought to bear on Atlanta city officials must be exerted.